

shame therfore. Thow shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtil wordes, to covere the moore thy synne; for thanne bigilestow thyself & nat the preest; thow most tellen it pleyntly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible.

THOU shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discret to conseille thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypcrisye, ne for no cause, but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the heele of thy soule. Thow shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly, to tellen hym lightly thy synne, as whoso telleth a jape or a tale, but avysely, & with greet devocioun. And generally, shryve thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou shryve thee ofte than ones of synne, of which thou hast be shryven, it is the moore merite. And, as seith Seint Augustyn, thow shalt have the moore lightly relesyng & grace of God, bothe of synne & of peyne. And certes, oones a yeere atte leeste wey it is laweful for to been housled; for certes, oones a yeere alle thynges renovellet. Now have I toold you of veray confessioun, that is the seconde partie of penitence.

Explicit secunda pars Penitencie; et sequitur tertia pars ejusdem.

THE thridde partie of penitence is satisfaccioun; and that stant moost generally in almesse, & in bodily peyne. Now been ther thre manere of almesses: contricioun of herte, where a man offreth hymself to God; another is, to han pitee of defaute of his neighbores; and the thridde is in yevyng of good conseil goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes food. And tak keep, that a man hath nede of these thynges generally; he hath nede of food, he hath nede of clothyng & herberwe, he hath nede of charitable conseil, and visityng in prisone and in maladie, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thow mayst nat visite the nedeful with thy persone, visite hym by thy message and by thy yiftes. These been generally almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporel riches or discrecioun in conseil. Of these werkes shaltow been at the day of doome.

THISE almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thynges, and hastily, and prively if thow mayst; but natheles, if thow mayst nat doon it prively, thow shalt nat forbere to doon almesse though men seen it; so that it be nat doon for thank of the world, but oonly for thank of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnesseth Seint Mathew, capitulo quinto: A citee may nat been hyd that is set on a mon-

tain; nemen lighte nat a lanterne and put it under a bussel; but men sette it on a candlestikke, to yev light to the men in the hous. Right so shal youre light lighten to fore men, that they may seen youre goode werkes, and glorief youre fader that is in hevne.

NOW as to speken of bodily peyne; it stant in preyer, in wakynges, in fastynges, in vertuous techinges of orisouns, or preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wyl of herte, that redresseth it in God and expresseth it by word outward, to retuene harmes and to han thynges espiituel & durable, and somtyme temporel thynges; of which orisouns, certes, in the orison of the Pater noster, hath Jhesu Crist enclosed moost thynges. Certes, it is privileged of thre thynges in his dignitee, for which it is moore digne than any oother preyer; for that Jhesu Crist hym self maketh it; and it is short, for it sholde be koud the moore lightly, and for to witholden it the moore esily in herte, & helpen hymself the ofter with the orison; and for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seyn it, and for a man may nat excusen hym to lerne it, it is so short and so esy; and for it comprehendeth in itself alle goode preyeres. The expositioun of this holy preyer, that is so excellent and digne, I bitake to these maistres of theologie; save thus muchel wol I seyn: that whan thow prayest that God sholde foryeve thee thy gyltes, as thou foryevest hem that agilen to thee, be ful wel war that thow be nat out of charitee. This holy orisoun amen useth eek veynyal synne; & therefore it aperteneth specially to penitence. This preyer mooste be trewely seyde, and in veray feith, & that men preyre to God ordinatly and discretly and devoutly; and alwey a man shal putten his wyl to be subget to the wille of God. This orisoun mooste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anoyauce of any man or womman. It mooste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. It avayleth eek agayn the vices of the soule; for, as seith Seint Jerome: By fastyng been saved the vices of the flesh, and by preyre the vices of the soule. After this, thow shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng; for Jhesu Crist seith: Waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun. Ye shul understanden also, that fastyng stant in thre thynges; in forberyng of bodily mete and drynke, and in forberyng of worldly jolitee, and in forberyng of deedly synne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen hym fro deedly synne with al his myght.

AND thou shalt understanden eek, that God ordeyned fastyng; and to fastyng appertenen foure thynges: largenesse to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espiituel, nat to been angry ne a-noyed, ne grucche for he fasteth; and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth. Channe shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techyng, by word and by writyng, or in ensample. Also in weryng of heyres or of stamyn, or of haubergeons on hire naked flessch, for Cristes sake, & swiche manere penances. But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flessch ne make nat thy herte bitter or angry or anoyed of thyself; for bettre is to caste away thy herte, than for to caste away the sikernes of Jhesu Crist. And therefore seith Seint Paul: Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of God, in herte of misericorde, debonairete, suffraunce, & swiche manere of clothyng; of which Jhesu Crist is moore apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. Channe is discipline eek in knockyng of thy brest, in scourgyng with verdes, in knelynges, in tribulaciouns; in suffryng paciently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or of othere freendes.

THANNE shaltow understonde, which thynges destourben penance; and this is in foure maneres; that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede; for which he demeth that he may suffre no penance. Ther agayns is remedie for to thynke that bodily penance is but short & litel, at regard of the peynes of helle, that is so cruel and so long that it lasteth withouten ende. Now agayn, the shame that a man hath to shryven hym, & namely, these ypcrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem. Agayns that shame, sholde a man thynke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thynges, certes hym oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thynges, & that is confessiouns. A man sholde eek thynke that God seeth & woot alle his thoghtes and alle his werkes; to hym may no thyng been hyd ne covered. Men sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of doome to hem that been nat penitent and shryven in this present lyf. For alle the creatures in erthe & in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world.

NOW for to speken of hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem; that stant in two maneres. That

oon is, that he hopeth for to lyve longe and for to purchacen multe riches for his delit, and thanne he wol shryven hym; &, as he seith, hym semeth thanne tymely ynough to come to shrifte. Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agayns the firste vice, he shal thynke, that oure life is in no sikernes; & eek that alle the riches in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal. And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of God, that nevere shal the peyne stynte, of hem that nevere wolde withdrawn hem fro synne, hir thanks, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetuel wil to do synne shul they han perpetuel peyne.

WANHOPE is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that oother is that they thynken that they ne myghten nat longe persevere in goodnesse. The firste wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so greetly and so ofte, & so longe leyn in synne, that he shal nat be saved. Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thynke, that the passion of Jhesu Crist is moore strong for to unbynde thanne synne is strong for to bynde. Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thynke, that as ofte as he falleth he may arise agayn by penitence; & though he nevere so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven hym to mercy. Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thynke that the feblese of the devel may nothing doon but if men wol suffren hym; & eek he shal han strengthe of the help of God, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if hym list.

THANNE shal men understonde what is the fruyt of penance; and, after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevne. Ther joye hath no contrariouste of wone grevaunce; ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; theras is the sikernes fro the peyne of helle; theras is the blisful compaignye that rejoysen hem everemo, everich of othere joye; theras the body of man, that whilom was foul and derk, is moore cleer than the sonne; theras the body, that whilom was syk, freele, and fieble, and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may nothing apeyren it; theras ne is neither hunger, thirst, ne coold, but every soule replenysed with the sighte of the parfite knowyng of God. This blisful regne may men purchase by povertie espiituel, and the glorie by lowenesse; the plente of joye by hunger and thirst, & the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacioun of synne.